

DJC Oregon

Energy efficiency comes to U.S. Bancorp

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The 42-story **U.S. Bancorp Tower** became the latest building to obtain **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design** designation for existing buildings. The designation comes as a culmination of five years of work to upgrade the HVAC and plumbing systems in the building.

Brian Pearce ~~Pearson~~, general manager of Unico Properties' Portland portfolio ~~vice president at Unico Properties~~, said upgrades to the building will not immediately raise its lease rates because the market wouldn't allow that to happen. Existing tenants would simply look for an existing, less expensive building. Nonetheless, Unico spent about \$4 million making the upgrades, which date back to 2004.

That's no drop in the bucket. But it's also expected to generate more money in the future.

"In all those cases (of LEED upgrades), there's eventually been a payback," Pearce said. "It translates to better operating costs."

In other words, Pearce hopes the building's sustainability features will attract environmentally conscious companies – firms that have made a corporate commitment to reducing their carbon footprint.

Currently, the building is 95 percent leased, so the building doesn't need new tenants, though Pearce admits he's "always looking for new tenants."

A major factor in the building's getting the new LEED designation had to do with modifications to the building's heat pumps. Unico installed what's known as a variable frequency device, which is like a dimmer switch for the air supply.